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Office of University
Communications

March 9, 2016

Drummer Phillip Snider ('12) Performs on Popular Reality TV Show

A chance meeting with a fellow musician led to a career opportunity for Gardner-Webb University alumnus Phillip Snider ('12). He was asked to play the drums on the popular A&E reality show, Duck Dynasty, in Monroe, La. The show stars the Robertson family, who have made millions selling duck calls and decoys.

"It took a lot of work to be invited to do this gig, and I am excited to see what the future holds," shared Snider, who is also a drummer at Passion City Church in Atlanta, Ga. Louie and Shelley Giglio lead Passion City and the Passion conferences, which are geared toward college students.

Playing worship music paved the way for Snider's appearance on Duck Dynasty. After graduating from Gardner-Webb with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Music with elective studies in music business, Snider moved to Atlanta to work as a contract musician. While performing in the area, he met and became friends with a musician who used to tour with Christian Rock Band Third Day.

"After playing one church service with him, he texted me a week later and asked if I wanted to play some country shows with Mac Powell (Third Day's lead singer). This was a no brainer," Snider related. "We played shows in Louisiana, Texas and Oklahoma. A month later, I was asked to go back to Monroe to play a show for Reed Robertson (Jase Robertson's son) and the Duck Dynasty crew. We played a couple of Reed's original songs and then played a few of Mac Powell's country songs before playing 'Amazing Grace' all together. Afterward we went back to Jase's house to film the family table scene that you see at the end of every episode."

Phillip Snider, second from left, after the appearance on Duck Dynasty

Snider's ability to play various styles of music with a variety of musicians was developed at Gardner-Webb through opportunities to play with the orchestra, percussion ensemble, marching band and jazz ensemble. "Not only was I learning about different styles, but I was able to apply them. Many times in orchestra I had to throw in an Afro-Cuban groove or start swinging, so it was great and also challenging," he explained. "Playing with people of all ages, levels and instruments proved to be something I and every musician needs to

experience. The music for orchestra and jazz ensemble is challenging and you cannot show up without any practice.”

Snider chose to complete his degree at Gardner-Webb after his first disheartening experience in the music business. “My mom—Judy, who is my biggest supporter—and I were looking for a school that had a music business department that would take credits from Musicians Institute, located in Hollywood, Calif., where I graduated with an Associates in Arts in Percussion Performance in 2007,” he shared. “I attempted a music career full time after moving back to my home in Georgia and landed a touring gig in Nashville, Tenn. But I ended up not touring one show. I wanted to study music business to guard myself and anyone else from having to deal with what I did. No money was lost fortunately, just pure disappointment.”

He started Gardner-Webb as a sophomore, five years older than the freshmen. Yet, they welcomed him and became his best friends. On his first day, a couple of students asked him to come play drums with their band. Then, one of them asked if he wanted to play for a church service. Every week he practiced with the worship team made up of GWU music students.

“It was great to serve not only the community but the Kingdom,” Snider assessed. “Gospel music is where my heart is, and it was me being invited to church and serving on the worship team that made me realize I wanted to play Christian/Gospel music. At the time I was not attending church. I was a believer, but did not have the community of a church family. God places people in your life to open doors sometimes. If I hadn’t come to Gardner-Webb and met someone who invited me to church, then I don’t know where I would be now.”